

SASKATCHEWAN SIGNATURES:

Why CP's GP38-2s Are Prairie Icons

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Framed by an endless horizon and ancient prairie skyscrapers, CP train C06, the Leader Wayfreight, rolls through Battrum, Saskatchewan, with three GP38-2s in the lead on August 13, 2007.

Saskatchewan – The “Land of the Living Skies.” An enchanting region, filled with golden wheat fields, an endless horizon, and sunsets that linger long after the subtle hues of orange and red have faded into the deep blue night. But, on a gloomy August morning in the central region of the province, the “Living Skies” fail to live up to their billing. A wall of

gray hangs over the bright yellow wheat fields between Broderick and Glenside where a 100-car string of stored government grain hoppers draws a more definitive boundary.

Coupled against the waiting hoppers, a pair of red Canadian Pacific GP38-2s pump air into the train line, while the crew performs an air test, readying the cars for movement to the



On August 13, 2007, a quartet of GP38-2s roll the Leader Wayfreight past Abbey, seeming to cut a path across a wheat field on their way to Leader.



Gardiner Dam Terminal, 24 miles south. With the train line pumped up to 90 pounds, the steady hand of the veteran hogger easily notches out the throttle on the 3070, and with sister 3123 lending a hand, the pair coax out the slack on the trailing Trudeau hoppers. Approaching Glenside, the distinctively Canadian Nathan K3 perched atop the 3070 calls a local boy to attention, who pauses from his four-wheeling to watch the train pass. It's a poignant moment for the youngster: Trains rarely pass through Glenside, and when the last muddy blue Alberta "Take a Break" hopper car fades into the distance, railroading in Glenside will be gone forever. Within two months, the rails will be ripped out and the solitude of the Saskatchewan prairie will slowly reclaim this part of the Outlook subdivision. For the Moose Jaw-assigned 3070 and 3123, closing another piece of prairie branch line is a task as familiar as lugging grain across the province.

For it was the 3070 and a pair of sister GP38-2s that rolled one of the last Assiniboia Tramps across Canadian Pacific's Wood Mountain subdivision in southern Saskatchewan nearly nine years earlier. Another trio of "38s" led the rail train that plucked most of the 65-mile subdivision from the earth in the fall of 1999. Beginning in the spring of 1983 and ending in mid-1986, CPR amassed a fleet of 115 GP38-2s, assigning over half of the roster to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, for maintenance. While the paint shop workers at GMD's London, Ontario, plant were placing the final touches of action red paint and nose striping on the last order of CP GP38-2s, the Canadian government was working

